

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Umatilla Electric Cooperative Temporary Line Connection

Project No.: LURR 20180439

Project Manager: Joe Cottrell

Location: Umatilla County, OR

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.12 Construction of powerlines

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration proposes to allow the Umatilla Electric Cooperative (UEC) to install temporary 115 kV tie lines to accommodate BPA construction and temporary electrical outage at McNary Substation. UEC would drive a short distance onto BPA property south of McNary Substation to connect line from two existing UEC pole towers located on BPA fee-owned land with UEC pole towers constructed on adjacent privately-owned land. UEC would run about 75 feet of transmission line from one existing UEC pole on BPA fee property to an existing UEC pole on private land. Approximately 450 feet to the north of this connection, UEC would also run about 75 feet of transmission line from another existing UEC pole on BPA fee property to an existing, adjacent UEC pole located on privately-owned land. The temporary 115 kV tie line connections would be removed in the next year when no longer needed. The site is located in Township 5 North, Range 28 East, Section 16.

Findings: In accordance with Section 1021.410(b) of the Department of Energy's (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations (57 FR 15144, Apr. 24, 1992, as amended at 61 FR 36221-36243, July 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996, 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011), BPA has determined that the proposed action:

- (1) fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D (see attached Environmental Checklist);
- (2) does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and
- (3) has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

/s/ Christopher H. Furey

Christopher H. Furey
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: November 13, 2018

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

Categorical Exclusion Environmental Checklist

This checklist documents environmental considerations for the proposed project and explains why the project would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources and would meet other integral elements of the applied categorical exclusion.

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Project Site Description

The project involving installation of approximately 75 feet in two locations of 115 kV connecting transmission tie line would start and end from UEC transmission poles located on BPA fee property to connect with UEC temporary poles located on private land. The project area consists of dry arid area south of the McNary Substation with access roads and some low-growing vegetation. The surrounding topography consists of flat areas with neighboring parcels comprised of warehouse space, roads, transmission lines, dry undeveloped areas, developed home sites, and some farmed land. The McNary Substation is located about 1,100 feet north of the project area. Highway 730 is about 250 feet south and Highway 82 is about 600 feet west of the project area. The Brownlee Irrigation Ditch crosses through the project area and a dirt access road runs through the south side of the project area. A review of the National Wetland Inventory, soil information, topography, and aerial photos did not reveal any wetlands or natural waterbodies at or near the site. The Social Security Pond, McNary Wildlife Nature Area, and the Columbia River are over 3,000 feet to the north of the project location.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. Historic and Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> BPA archaeologist reviewed proposed activities and determined that these activities at the project area for the installation of the transmission line connections would not have potential to cause effects to historic or cultural resources. Vehicles would be primarily on the access road, and there may be foot traffic within the grassy area.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> There would be minimal soil disturbance for installation of the temporary transmission line from use of a truck during installation.		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The project would be occurring within the BPA right-of-way that is currently managed for low-growing vegetation. In addition, there are no listed or special-status species present.		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Installation of the transmission line is expected to occur during daytime hours with limited to no effect to wildlife, including any listed or special-status species.		

5. **Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish**
(including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)



Explanation: The nearest water bodies are Social Security Pond and the Columbia River, which are located over 2,500 feet north of the project location. The vehicles for the project would be on primarily existing access roads and installation of the temporary transmission line for this project would be in the right-of-way without impact to the pond or river, and would avoid impact to the Brownlee Irrigation ditch.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: The nearest wetlands are over 1,300 feet to the south of the project area. The project will access the area from the road and highway next to the project area without impacts to wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: The project would not impact groundwater or aquifers.

8. **Land Use and Specially Designated Areas**



Explanation: The installation of the transmission line would not impact land use or specially designated areas. Access to the adjacent property with self-storage warehouses would not be impeded.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: There would be limited visual changes to the project area or surrounding environment due to the addition of the approximately 75feet of temporary transmission line to existing transmission towers in an area with several existing transmission lines.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions would occur during installation.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Temporary vehicle noise would occur during daylight hours. No ongoing noise increase is expected.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: Aerial installation of temporary 115 kV transmission line using a truck on existing UEC poles in the BPA right-of-way is not expected to impact human health and safety.

Evaluation of Other Integral Elements

The proposed project would also meet conditions that are integral elements of the categorical exclusion. The project would not:

- Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those of the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institutes of Health.

Explanation, if necessary:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: BPA Realty is in coordination with the Umatilla Electric Cooperative for this project.

Based on the foregoing, this proposed project does not have the potential to cause significant impacts to any environmentally sensitive resource.

Signed: /s/ Christopher H. Furey
Christopher H. Furey, ECT-4

Date: November 13, 2018